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New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: The Committee will today begin its thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons. We have two guest speakers: Mr. Roberto García Moritán, Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms; and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam, President of the Conference to Review the Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

However, before we start our thematic discussion on conventional weapons issues, I intend to give the floor to a representative who, owing to time constraints, was unable to make a statement yesterday on other weapons of mass destruction or disarmament aspects of outer space. After he has spoken, I will give the floor to those representatives who were unable to introduce draft resolutions yesterday. We will then begin our discussion on today's thematic subject.

I first give the floor to the representative of the Sudan, who was unable to make a statement yesterday on other weapons of mass destruction or disarmament aspects of outer space.

Mr. Daffalla (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like first of all to thank His Excellency Ambassador Masood Kahn for his statement yesterday on the threats posed by biological and toxin weapons. My delegation reaffirms its determination to work to ensure a successful outcome to the sixth Review Conference to be held in November, especially given the failure of the 2000 Review Conference.

The international community must redouble its efforts to learn lessons from the past, to go beyond the negative results of the previous conference and to consider to what extent the Convention has achieved its objectives and met expectations. My delegation therefore emphasizes the need to revitalize the section pertaining to confidence-building measures, including through the provision of assurances, with a view to ensuring the proper implementation of the Convention.

My delegation would like to recall the role played by the Sudan in this respect by hosting, in 2003, the first Conference of the African National Authorities of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we stress the importance of such action at the regional level. Cooperation among African States is essential if we are to combat the use of chemical weapons and to prevent the possibility of such technologies falling into the hands of terrorists, which would threaten international peace and security. In that context, we must all unite in support of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on

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Biological and Toxin Weapons. The universal nature of this Convention is based primarily upon the need for member States to implement the relevant programmes of action. Herein lies the importance of national efforts all by all parties concerned.

With regard to ensuring the safety and security of outer space, the risk of its militarization must be addressed. We must make sure that outer space is safeguarded against detrimental activities and in a way that would benefit all of humankind. We are not calling for all outer space activities to be reduced in scope, but we must ensure that outer space is not endangered in a manner that could have negative consequences for life on Earth. To that end, our delegation asks that all activities in outer space be devoted to peaceful purposes, with full transparency.

The Chairperson: We will now proceed with the introduction of draft resolutions and draft decisions by those delegations that wished to do so yesterday.

I call first on the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.52.

Mr. Prasad (India): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.52, entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction". This draft resolution, first adopted in 2002, has continuing relevance as an unambiguous statement from a body that is universal and democratic. The representative character of the General Assembly validates and reinforces the commitments that we assume as Member States with regard to its objectives.

The draft resolution gives expression to the concerns of the international community and calls upon United Nations Member States to take measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It underlines that the international response to that threat needs to be inclusive, multilateral and global. That approach has been widely endorsed by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of Eight, the European Union and most other regional forums, including the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In addition to including some technical updates, the draft resolution reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to compile a report on measures undertaken by international organizations on issues relating to the linkage between the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It thus equips the General Assembly with system-wide information on the work being done on that issue within the United Nations as well as in other bodies.

I appeal to delegations of the First Committee to lend to this initiative an even wider measure of support than that expressed over the previous four years, especially through additional sponsorship of the draft resolution. That would demonstrate a larger measure of engagement by the entire United Nations membership on this vital issue.

The Chairperson: Before giving the floor to the next speaker on my list, I ask that the Secretary brief the Committee on the current status of the various draft resolutions.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): I wish first to let members know what lies ahead: during the next few minutes, the following draft resolutions will be introduced.

First, there will be an introduction of the draft resolution on transparency in armaments. Secondly, there will be an introduction of the draft resolution under item 97, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction". Thirdly, there will be an introduction under sub-item (o) of item 90, "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". The fourth introduction will pertain to sub-item (p) of item 90, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction". The fifth speaker will introduce, under sub-item (c) of item 90, the draft on measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The sixth introduction will be under sub-item (b) of item 90, "Missiles". Finally, there will be a presentation - not under this thematic cluster, but under the thematic cluster on nuclear weapons - under item 89, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", sub-item (g) of item 90, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", and item 93, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

The Chairperson: I now call on the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.38.

Mr. Haasbroek (Netherlands): I would like to draw the attention of members to draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.38, "Transparency in armaments", which the Netherlands submitted yesterday and which has been distributed to all delegations. The draft resolution is of particular importance, as transparency in military matters contributes directly to the building of confidence and security between Governments.

In order to respond to the increased desire of Governments for openness on these matters, the United Nations established the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in 1991. Annually, all Member States can provide data, on a voluntary basis, on their imports and exports of arms. Every three years, a Group of Governmental Experts reviews the operation and considers further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

This process really works. The respective Groups of Governmental Experts have made consistent and considerable progress. The recommendations of this year's expert group are now included in the draft resolution.

What is new? The 2006 Group of Governmental Experts has built on the achievements of the 2003 Group, whose work paved the way for broadening the scope of the Register. First, it has been recommended that international transfers of conventional arms involving only United Nations Member States should be reported to the Register. Secondly, an extension of the notification commitment regarding the sixth category of the Register — information exchange on a broader range of warships — has been proposed. Thirdly, the Group has developed an optional, standardized form for notification of transfers of small arms and light weapons. That will make notification easier for States.

Those recommendations are incorporated into the new draft resolution. Last year, the draft resolution was co-sponsored by 106 States. I kindly invite all delegations to sponsor the draft resolution this year so that we can do even better.

The Chairperson: I now call on the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.27.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Hungary, following the practice of recent years, has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.27, on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Our objective is the consensus adoption by the General Assembly of the draft resolution during the course of the sixty-first session as well.

Given the fact that the Sixth Review Conference will follow the meetings of the First Committee, the Committee is not in a position to evaluate the outcome of the Review Conference. Thus, no reference is included in the draft text that would prejudge the outcome of the Review Conference.

The current draft builds primarily on the resolutions adopted in recent years while, at the same time, introducing the necessary updates to the text. In that regard, it welcomes, in the third preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 2, the information and data provided by States parties through confidence-building measures; in operative paragraph 3, the significant participation of States in the intersessional process between 2003 and 2005 and the constructive and useful exchange of information achieved; in operative paragraph 4, the discussion and the promotion of common understanding and effective action on topics agreed at the Fifth Review Conference; and, in operative paragraph 6, the convening of the Sixth Review Conference, as agreed by the Preparatory Committee.

The draft resolution recalls, in its new operative paragraph 5, that the Sixth Review Conference was mandated to consider issues identified in the review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action. In operative paragraph 7, the Secretary-General is requested to continue to render assistance in the future.

Furthermore, under the final operative paragraph of the draft text, Member States decide that the item on the BTWC will be included, also in view of the outcome of the Sixth Review Conference, on the provisional agenda of the sixty-second session.

The language of the draft is aimed at avoiding any controversy or the reopening of discussions that might result from the aforementioned coincidence in timing. It is in our common interest for the Sixth Review Conference to be successful.

In that connection, the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, as in previous years, remains a priority for us. Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the BTWC. At the same time, we hope that Member States will be in a position to support the draft resolution this year as well.

Mr. Koshelev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation wishes to submit for consideration by the First Committee a draft resolution entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (A/C.1/61/L.36).

Ensuring security in outer space and the safe functioning of spacecraft is a crucial task. The use of outer space is becoming increasingly important to humankind, and the benefits to all States of the use of spacecraft are becoming increasingly evident today.

In that respect, it is essential to enhance our knowledge of outer space; promote transparency in States' activities; avert any accidental or deliberate interference in the normal functioning of spacecraft; and ensure the non-deployment of weapons in outer space.

Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities would help ensure the predictability of such activities and could become a consolidating factor for all States in that respect. The achievement of concrete results and the elaboration of a well-thought-out and responsible approach to the further development and use of outer space would no doubt weaken any motivation to deploy weapons in outer space.

The draft resolution submitted by Russia is based on General Assembly resolutions aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. It further elaborates on resolution 60/66, also entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", adopted last year. Operative paragraph 1 of resolution 60/66 requests States to give their views on the advisability of further developing international outer space transparency and confidence-building measures in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We believe that all States would be in favour of such activities.

We are grateful to all those States that have informed the Secretary-General of their views on this issue. The new draft resolution goes a step further than resolution 60/66 in that it invites all Member States to submit to the Secretary-General before the sixty-second session concrete proposals on international outer space transparency and confidence-building measures in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The draft also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly a report on this issue.

The draft is an invitation to hold further discussions on an issue that has direct bearing on the security and safety of all States, regardless of their outer space potential. We noted last year that we view the recommendations made in the report (A/48/305) of the Secretary-General submitted to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly as a practical objective for our work. Those recommendations propose that research be done by governmental experts on the implementation of measures to strengthen confidence-building measures in outer space.

The situation 13 years later has indeed evolved. We have made great progress in the field of outer-space technology, and we have to react to those changes. Accordingly, we deem it worthwhile for the United Nations to continue to work in the area of outer space activities.

We are convinced that this new draft resolution is line with the interests of all States without exception. It does not limit the legal right of States to self-defence, nor does it prevent States from engaging in the peaceful use of outer space. Our goal is to take into account the views of all States Members of the United Nations, with a view to the maintenance of international peace, security and stability.

We distributed the text of our draft resolution in a timely manner, and it remains unchanged. We are grateful to those States that have become sponsors of the draft.

We appeal to States to support the Russian draft resolution entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". We hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Chomicki (Poland): It is my honour and pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the delegation of

Poland, a draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC).

It is a longstanding tradition for Poland to introduce a draft resolution on the implementation of the CWC. We believe that this draft resolution is unique and important because it concerns weapons of mass destruction, namely chemical weapons; it represents a success story for multilateralism; and each year it incorporates new elements that objectively reflect the process of the implementation of the CWC. Work on the draft resolution is conducted in an atmosphere of trust and transparency, it has overwhelming support from all regions, and it is adopted by consensus. Our aim is to continue these positive traditions, and we will do our best in that regard.

The draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is once again very timely. In our work on the draft, we concentrated on developments in the implementation of the CWC since the adoption of last year's resolution. There were real achievements and also some challenges, which are reflected in this year's draft.

The draft introduces the following new element: the reaffirmation of the obligation of the States parties to destroy chemical weapons within the time limits provided for by the Convention. That important substantive addition was made for the first time in the history of the Chemical Weapons Convention resolution. The introduction of that paragraph is a serious achievement of all delegations, which worked constructively and in a spirit of understanding and cooperation.

The draft resolution welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter as the Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. A reference is made to the beginning of work on the preparations for the second special session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Special emphasis is placed on the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and note is taken of the unveiling in The Hague on 9 May 2007 of a permanent memorial to all victims of chemical weapons.

Special emphasis is also placed on maintaining the importance of the action plan on the implementation of article VII on national implementation measures. The draft resolution also stresses the importance of articles VII and X in the fight against terrorism. That is the first reference in any General Assembly draft resolution to the importance of the national implementation of a disarmament treaty in the fight against terrorism.

The importance of the role of international cooperation and assistance is confirmed. The draft resolution also reaffirms the importance of article XI provisions relating to the economic and technological development of States parties and recalls that the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of those provisions contributes to universality.

We consider that the text of this year's draft resolution is well balanced. It demonstrates the unreserved support of the United Nations for the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. Our basic intention and goal was to ensure, as in last year's resolution, consensus approval for the draft resolution. Consensus is crucial to providing the unmitigated support of the United Nations for the implementation of the Convention.

Let me express gratitude and thanks to the delegations that participated in the extensive consultations on the new draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Those consultations confirm the existence of broad political support in all regions for the implementation of the Convention in its entirety. The agreed draft resolution presented today is a material expression of that support.

As in previous years, Poland remains the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The sole sponsorship has been supported in various consultations and shows regional and political balance and broad support for the draft resolution. The delegation asks for the adoption of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention without a vote.

Mr. Adji (Indonesia): I have the honour, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, to introduce the following draft resolution for the consideration of the Committee. Under the cluster before us, we will submit a draft resolution entitled "Measures to uphold the

authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol", as contained in document A/C.1/61/L.5, under agenda item 90 (c).

There are only two technical updatings of the draft resolution, contained in the first preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 4. We continue to renew our call to all States to observe strictly the principles and objectives of the 1925 general Protocol. We also call upon States that have not yet done so to withdraw their reservations to the Protocol. We believe that such an act would contribute positively to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

We hope that all member States will render their support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the honour to take the floor to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.3, entitled "Missiles". Egypt, Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran are the sponsors of the draft resolution.

Since the introduction of this item in the agenda of the General Assembly in 1999, increasing support has been given to addressing the issue of missiles in all its aspects within the United Nations. The Non-Aligned Movement, in the final document of its recent summit in Havana, stated that

> "the Non-Aligned Movement heads of State and Government remain convinced of the need for a multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive, transparent and non-discriminatory approach towards missiles in all their aspects as a contribution to international peace and security. They express their support for efforts to be continued within the United Nations to explore further the issue of missiles in all its aspects. In this regard, they emphasize the need to keep the issue on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly and that, in accordance with its resolution 59/67, a Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects will be established in 2007."

The first Panel of Governmental Experts, which was established in 2002, adopted its report — the very first such report in the history of the United Nations — in which the issue of missiles in all its aspects was addressed comprehensively. The success of the first Panel opened the prospects for exploring further ways and means on that issue within the United Nations.

Unfortunately, the second Panel of Governmental Experts ended its task short of a success similar to that of the first. The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly, stated that

> "given the complexity of the issues at hand, no consensus was reached on the preparation of a final report" (*A/59/278, para. 5*).

That situation showed once again that dealing with the complex issue of missiles requires further preparation, with extensive organization, proper timing and intensified effort on the part of all of us.

In that regard, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/67, in which it requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report, with the support of qualified consultants and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), as appropriate, taking into account the views expressed by Member States, to contribute to the United Nations endeavour to address the issue of missiles in all its aspects by identifying areas where consensus could be reached and to submit it to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. Thanks to the efforts of UNIDIR and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the report was prepared and submitted on time.

The General Assembly, by resolution 59/67, also decided to establish a third panel of governmental experts in the consecutive years of 2007 and 2008, with a more specific mandate "to further explore further ways and means to address within the United Nations the issue of missiles in all its aspects, including identifying areas where consensus can be reached" (*para. 3*). That mandate, in contrast to the broad mandates of the previous Panels, has been narrowed down for the purpose of enabling the Panel of Governmental Experts to be more specific and focused in its discussions. The time frame of two years for the Panel seeks to provide more time to its experts to enable them to have a thorough and sufficient discussion.

This year's draft resolution is based on previous resolutions, including resolution 59/67, and has been updated without any substantive changes. It takes note of the recent report submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/61/168. That report will be a valuable input to the third Panel of Governmental Experts,

which will hold its first session in June next year. We expect that the upcoming Panel will succeed in fulfilling its mandate by identifying areas where consensus can be reached on the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

My delegation hopes that the delegations of this Committee will be able to support the draft resolution, as they have in previous years.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt, together with an overwhelming majority of States, believes that the conclusion of a comprehensive legal instrument, based on the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is the only way to address the clear shortcomings in the legal regime governing outer space.

In that context, the Conference on Disarmament dealt elaborately with issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space through the work of the Ad Hoc Committee that was convened within the framework of the Conference between 1985 and 1994. The Committee's conclusions from the 1985 meeting made clear the urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space. Current developments reaffirm that urgency. That should prompt us to conclude an agreement to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament next year.

Egypt supports the efforts of Russia and China to draft in the near future an international legal agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the use or threat of use of weapons against objects in outer space. That would represent an important step towards addressing the entire issue of the militarization of outer space and a major contribution to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space once it has been re-established.

Indeed, any legal instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space should include a ban on the use of outer space for military purposes and clear provisions to promote cooperation among States to ensure that the use and exploitation of outer space redound to the benefit of all States, in accordance with the preamble to the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Egypt also believes that regional and international peace and security can be achieved not through the prevalence of military doctrines, but through cooperation among all States. In that context, we reaffirm our support for the launching of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament to establish a comprehensive regime to prevent the use of outer space for any military purpose, in the framework of a programme of work agreed by consensus in the Conference.

In the light of the foregoing, my delegation is submitting a draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, contained in document A/C.1/61/L.10. The draft resolution is submitted alternately every year by Sri Lanka and Egypt. It calls on all States to pursue their efforts to reach agreement on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to the creation of a legal regime on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We call on all States to continue to support the draft resolution, especially in the light of the detailed and concentrated discussions held in the Conference on Disarmament in 2006 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and my own country, Mexico, I have the honour to introduce for the fourth time a draft resolution entitled "United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education", under agenda item 90 (f).

The sponsors are convinced that disarmament and non-proliferation education is an effective tool to provide ways and means to increase national and international security at the lowest possible level of armaments and to reinforce the link between global peace, general security and sustainable development in a world that is increasingly interdependent, as indicated in the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education.

The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report on progress in the implementation of the recommendations contained in

the study, and to submit it to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session. It also requests the Secretary-General to disseminate all information related to that report and any other information that the Department for Disarmament Affairs gathers in regard to progress in that area.

As members will recall, the text has been adopted without a vote in previous years. We hope that we can again count on the support of all delegations with a view to achieving consensus once again in support of the goals that we all pursue in this Committee.

Now, on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay, and my own country, Mexico, my delegation is honoured to introduce a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Disarmament Information Programme", under agenda item 91 (b).

The draft resolution has been submitted biennially since 1996. It seeks to ensure follow-up to the World Disarmament Campaign. The text we are submitting on this occasion recognizes the efforts made by the Secretariat to ensure the effective use of the limited resources for the dissemination of the Programme, including by electronic means and the media, and to inform our Governments of the adverse effects of weapons proliferation, in particular with regard to small arms and light weapons.

The draft resolution also recommends that the Programme continue to educate and generate public understanding of the importance of multilateral action, including action by the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament aimed at general and complete disarmament.

The dissemination of information in that important field is a further measure to help us to meet our objectives. To that end, we call upon delegations once again to express their support for the draft text, which has been distributed. We recall that both texts submitted today are open to further co-sponsorship.

The Chairman: I now propose to move on to today's thematic discussion. I will first give the floor to our guest speakers.

I call on the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Mr. R. García Moritán (Argentina) (Chairman, Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor, I wish to express my special pleasure at seeing you, Madam, preside over the work of the First Committee at this particular time, when the disarmament agenda certainly requires exceptional leadership if it is to regain its former dynamism. I am sure that, under your skilful leadership, we will be able to conclude our session this year with a more encouraging outcome for all the items under discussion.

I have the responsibility of chairing the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms this year. I also had the opportunity to do so in 2003. I must say with some satisfaction that, both in 2003 and 2006, we were able to make encouraging progress on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Our Register is especially important as an obvious and essential confidence-building measure. That is clearly reflected in the high level of participation among Member States in the Register. An analysis of the material that has been distributed to delegations by the Department for Disarmament Affairs reveals that participation is particularly important. Since the Register's establishment, some 170 have participated in it. Only 22 States Members of the United Nations — 15 from Africa and seven from Asia — have not done so. I believe that this gives a sense of the Register's importance. If representatives have the chance to consider document A/61/159, they will find included the reports submitted up to 2005 by Member States that grasped the significance of doing so.

If we compare the information compiled in the Register to non-governmental reports, such as that of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, we note that some 97 per cent of the global trade in conventional weapons is covered by the Register. That figure may increase considerably next year, as it is very likely that the five permanent members of the Security Council will submit reports for the first time, at which point the report will cover 99 per cent of the global arms trade.

I believe that gives us a clear indication of the Register's importance and the extent to which that confidence-building measure effectively contributes to preventing the excessive accumulation of weapons and averting political destabilization, and without a doubt to effective confidence-building.

This year, we have made tangible progress once again, chiefly in the category of warships. We have been able to reduce tonnage on those warships for which information has been submitted. That is not insignificant, as it substantively broadens the scope of information on which we expect Member States to report.

Another important aspect on which the Register made significant progress is the voluntary way in which Member States can submit information. In that respect, we have included an element to which I attach particular importance: the form on small arms and light weapons. That is an issue of increasing significance and to which all delegations should pay particular attention. The new form will allow those Member States that wish to do so to submit their reports annually, systematically and in an orderly manner. It is divided into two segments — one on small arms and the other on light weapons. We identify the elements that fall under each heading. This is not an attempt to offer a complete definition of small arms and light weapons, but it will undoubtedly provide indicative tools of what Member States are to provide information on.

The delegation of the Netherlands was kind enough to introduce a draft resolution this afternoon on the adoption of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts.

We are also on the brink of taking additional important steps. We shall soon include new technological means used in electronic warfare and the projection of forces in each of the categories. We are also very close to including unmanned aerial vehicles as an additional significant factor. We held an intense debate on the possibility of the future inclusion of an eighth category on small arms and light weapons. I must confess that I have not yet lost hope that we will be able to include that eighth category in the future.

We wish to express our particular gratitude through you, Madam, to Under-Secretary-General Tanaka and his team, in particular Mr. Nazir Kamal, whose cooperation has been excellent. We also thank the various experts for their participation; they have helped the Group yet again to make progress in updating the Register, as requested by the General Assembly.

The Chairman: I now call on the President of the Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka) (President, United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the members of this Committee in my capacity as the President of the recently concluded Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. First, I should like to extend my congratulations to you, Madam, on your election to guide the work of this Committee at this difficult and challenging juncture for disarmament in general, and non-proliferation in particular.

I am also pleased to see so many familiar faces here, who toiled with me during the Review Conference. Of course, I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Tanaka and his team for the support that they gave me during those difficult times.

As we meet in the wake of the 2006 Review Conference, this session of the First Committee no doubt will also focus on the outcome of the Conference. It is possible for member States to pick up from where we left off in July and chart a course on the way forward to fully implementing the Programme of Action and even to look beyond with a view to strengthening our global efforts.

We need to learn lessons from the Review Conference as to how we can contribute better to our struggle against the scourge of illicit small arms and light weapons. I am happy therefore that I have now been given an opportunity to share some thoughts with the First Committee.

Yes, we are all disappointed that the Review Conference could not agree on an outcome document, but I think it would be a mistake if we allow that fact to devalue the broader positive impact of the

Conference. The lack of a concrete outcome should not discourage us from pursuing the full implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels with renewed vigour and determination. We should not overlook the fact that over 30 per cent of the speakers in the general debate of the Review Conference were high-level representatives, many of them at the ministerial level. A large number of civil society representatives and parliamentarians were among the stakeholders at the Conference who contributed energetically to mainstreaming the issue at the global level. A significant achievement at the Conference was the overwhelming reaffirmation of the commitment of participating member States and other stakeholders to fully implement the Programme of Action.

When I agreed to preside over the work of the 2006 Review Conference, I was fully aware of the trials and tribulations of the task. I was handicapped by a lack of progress on substantive issues at the Preparatory Committee meeting of the Conference. Therefore, from the outset there was no apparent clarity on divergent views on substance, as well as differing interpretations of the scope of the Conference. On the one hand, a very large number of States adopted a work-in-progress view of the Programme of Action and perceived the Conference as an opportunity to strengthen the Programme Of Action through further agreements on several important issues that were left unresolved in 2001. On the other hand, some others preferred an approach that would limit the Conference to a straightjacket evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the agreed Programme of Action. The latter group seemed to argue that the Programme of Action was in its early stages of implementation or far from being fully implemented, and that therefore the focus of the Conference should be only on improving the Programme's implementation.

Faced with that challenge, it became important to undertake extensive consultations, both bilaterally and multilaterally, in order to try to reconcile opposing approaches and begin a process of consensus-building way ahead of the Conference. Therefore, in the period from March to May, I conducted several open-ended informal consultations and attended several regional and other meetings. Following those efforts, I developed a non-paper that, in my perception, could serve as a basis for negotiations on a final outcome of the Conference. Reflecting as much as possible the various inputs and views received from States, some of which were completely contradictory of one another, the non-paper evolved through several revisions during the consultation process leading up to the Conference. The non-paper, I am happy to say, was later adopted as a working paper by the Conference and is thus available on record.

During the consultation process, it became clear that there was little or no chance for agreement on the two most contentious, but most-talked-about issues relevant to the substance of the Programme Of Action that had been left out in 2001: the issue of controls on civilian possession, and small arms and light weapons transfers to non-State actors. However, on most other issues, I felt that if States could muster enough political will and flexibility, the possibility existed to reach a compromise. However, progress towards compromise remained slow and, despite an encouraging breakthrough — the emergence of a compromise on language concerning small arms and light weapons transfer controls — in the end it was not possible to overcome some differences. The Conference, therefore, could not agree on a meaningful outcome document that would not diminish the pith and the substance of the Programme of Action and would contain recommendations for concrete measures to fully implement the Programme of Action with a clear road map for follow-up action, in particular at the global level.

There has been much discussion on the reasons why it was not possible to conclude an outcome document. We need to look at a combination of factors, and let me point out some issues that, in my view, may be useful for further reflection.

First is the current status of the multilateral disarmament agenda. The small arms and light weapons process is not immune to the malaise currently afflicting multilateral disarmament efforts. Unless all Member States, particularly major Powers, renew their confidence in the United Nations as a stage or a vehicle for addressing important disarmament issues at the global level and renew their commitment to global measures in multilateral forums, we are bound to see an increasing number of inconclusive United Nations disarmament meetings in the future.

Second is the failure to reach a compromise on key unresolved issues. The 2001 Programme of Action

was a manifestation of the resolve of the international community to address a burning and real issue that was affecting a great number of countries and societies. The United Nations was expected to coordinate that effort at the global, regional and national levels with the cooperation of all the stakeholders. However, the Programme was adopted as a compromise and it was understood that all issues relevant to illicit small arms and light weapons were not included in it; in particular, some key issues were deliberately left out in 2001 for the sake of consensus. It was assumed by many at that time that the Programme was a first step on the long road towards eliminating the proliferation of illicit small arms worldwide.

Many agree that without addressing several issues, such as non-State actors, ammunition and civilian possession, it will not be possible to adequately address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In that context, it is essential that the Programme of Action be understood as a living document subject to global dynamics that change with time, and therefore in need of review and strengthening in a forward-looking manner to be fully implemented in all its aspects. The problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons can be handled meaningfully by the international community only if we all reckon that the Programme of Action cannot and should not be frozen in time.

Third is the consensus rule. In the United Nations, as a matter of established practice on issues that relate to the national security of States, decisions are taken on the basis of consensus. The small arms and light weapons issue became no exception to that understanding. However, consensus works best when all the parties genuinely seek compromise for the sake of the common good and are willing to exercise flexibility in order to achieve results acceptable to an overwhelming and preponderant majority. In that context, the establishment of rigid redlines is certainly not conducive to achieving consensus. The practice adopted by some of insisting on unanimity as consensus can lead to a veto on the consensus-building process. I am convinced that a more judicious use of the consensus rule during the Review Conference and its preparatory process would have gone a long way towards the conclusion of an outcome document.

The outcome of the Review Conference is not a reason for any discouragement. The Review Conference did not diminish the value or the palpable progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. Since 2001, hundreds of thousands of weapons and ammunition have been destroyed and national commissions have been established in over 80 countries, including in my country. States adopted an international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and we have made advances towards addressing the key issue of illicit brokering, which will be the object of a study by a Group of Governmental Experts that will commence its work next month. Most importantly, the international community as a whole has been made aware of the abominable effects of the illicit trade in small arms, and several States and societies are taking unilateral measures to curb that evil practice.

The road ahead is still quite long and arduous. We must keep our spirits high and persevere in our struggle to spare humanity from the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons. The elimination of that scourge will bring peace and tranquillity to many countries, societies and neighbourhoods. We need to continue improving measures for the full implementation of the Programme of Action, and we also need to look beyond. If we are to be effective in that regard, it is essential to have a mechanism at the global level to evaluate, in a transparent and cooperative manner, how States, regional and international organizations, and civil society have embarked on implementing their commitments and agreed at the global level to enhance international cooperation and assistance to enable all States to fulfil their commitments.

The Programme of Action already envisages the need for periodic reviews in its implementation. Indeed, the breadth and substance of the debate, the mobilization of civil society and the media, and the intensive preparatory process at the national and international levels in the period leading up to and during the review mechanism meetings are in themselves important factors in keeping the momentum alive and in manifesting and sensitizing international opinion. I am hopeful, therefore, that this Committee will seize the opportunity to agree on a mandate for such a forward-looking mechanism.

In conclusion, let me recall the poignant words of the Secretary-General at the commencement of the Review Conference, when he said that those weapons may be small, but they cause mass destruction. And it is time we hear his words once again. Time is running out. Let us commit ourselves once again to all action

possible to stop the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in our midst now.

The Chairman: It is now my intention to provide the Committee with the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with our guest speakers by having an informal question and answer session. Before doing so, I will suspend the meeting in order to continue in an informal mode.

The meeting was suspended at 4.15 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.

The Chairperson: I will now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on today's thematic subject, "Conventional weapons".

Mr. Turcotte (Canada): As we are all acutely aware, the illicit transfer and misuse of conventional weapons have had a devastating impact on people throughout the world. Canada's approach to the many issues related to conventional weapons includes traditional non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, as well as humanitarian, human rights and development concerns.

Although there have been some disappointments in the past year, we have also seen progress, reflecting what we believe to be the widespread collective determination of States to address issues related to small arms, landmines and a host of other conventional weapons.

Canada recognizes the need to continue to strengthen the global regulatory framework governing the transfer of all conventional weapons. To that end, we fully support General Assembly resolution 60/226, which addresses transfers of conventional arms, and submit regular annual reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We encourage all States to submit annual reports pursuant to that resolution.

As stated in July at the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Canada is also supportive, in principle, of a comprehensive, legally binding arms trade treaty that prevents the illicit flow of arms to conflict zones. We commend the work done to date by civil society and the United Kingdom on the arms trade treaty initiative, and we will work closely with all involved.

Combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons while respecting the legitimate interests of lawful firearms producers, exporters, retailers and owners is an important element of Canada's foreign policy. Canada remains committed to the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and places particular priority on transfer controls to prevent illicit flows; ensuring responsible civilian possession and the appropriate use of small arms by State officials; stockpile management and disposal; reducing the demand for small arms and light weapons for illicit purposes; and increased international cooperation and assistance. Canada also welcomes the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to examine the brokering of small arms and light weapons. Like many others, we were disappointed that States did not agree upon an outcome document at the Review Conference in the summer. Nonetheless, it is our belief that through renewed creative and constructive efforts, we will achieve our common goals.

With respect to process, Canada sees great value in regular, global-level meetings to advance implementation of the Programme of Action. In our view, these should include both formal meetings of States at least every two years and informal intersessional meetings to bring States together more frequently so that important thematic work can continue to be undertaken between formal meetings of States.

Canada also recognizes the multifaceted threat posed by the illicit trade in man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and values the many initiatives in that area, particularly those of Australia, Israel and the United States. We view the potential risk of the misuse of MANPADS primarily from a non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament perspective, and will continue to work closely with other States to effectively address this issue.

Another area where concerted action on conventional weapons is well under way is the global effort to rid the world of the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. With 151 States parties, the Ottawa Convention has become a key instrument in addressing the humanitarian, peace, security and development impact of anti-personnel landmines. At the world summit on mine action in Nairobi two years ago, as well as last year in Zagreb and at the seventh meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in

Geneva just last month, States parties reaffirmed their determination to achieve the goal of a mine-free world and to provide all necessary support to landmine survivors in order that they can be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their societies as full, productive members. Canada continues to support all aspects of mine action and commends the significant efforts of mine-affected States parties to fulfil their treaty obligations within the established deadlines. Canada also acknowledges the extremely valuable contributions of many other donor countries, and is pleased that we are collectively staying the course.

The results speak for themselves. The number of direct victims has been cut virtually in half in less than a decade, and vast tracts of land have been returned to productive use. Even greater results can be expected as the number of States parties continues to grow.

In our capacity as coordinator of the Convention's universalization contact group, Canada is pleased to report that four countries have ratified the treaty since December 2005, and several more indicated at the most recent meeting of States parties, in September, that they have put processes in motion that will lead to accession in the near future. We welcome the many statements by States parties which emphasize the importance they place on the universalization of the Convention, and we encourage accession by all countries.

Canada is extremely concerned about the humanitarian and development impact of other types of weapons as well, and hopes that the forthcoming third Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to be held next month in Geneva, will produce concrete results. Canada welcomes the entry into force of Protocol V of the CCW, which addresses the humanitarian impact of explosive remnants of war. We are in the process of considering ratification of Protocol V and encourage all other States to do so as well.

Like many other countries, Canada is disappointed by the lack of progress on mines other than anti-personnel mines after almost five years of discussion, and we hope that States will begin to negotiate a new protocol on such mines immediately following the forthcoming Review Conference.

The current mandate of the Working Group on Explosive Remnants of War, which has attempted to determine the adequacy of international humanitarian law with respect to weapons which may lead to explosive remnants of war, is coming to an end. It will be very important to determine appropriate next steps.

In closing, I would like to say that it is our sincere hope that we will continue to use our collective experience to guide our deliberations in order that the work we undertake during this session of the First Committee will further advance our shared arms control and humanitarian goals.

Mr. Kahiluoto (Finland): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The uncontrolled proliferation and wide misuse of small arms and light weapons are at the heart of the main security challenges of our time. Action against these phenomena has to be intensified. Small arms and light weapons and their ammunition are instrumental in the deaths of more than 500,000 people annually, the vast majority of victims being civilians. Small arms and light weapons are a major factor in triggering and spreading conflict and in the collapse of State structures; they facilitate violent crime and terrorism, impede post-conflict reconstruction and undermine development. Of the 49 major conflicts in the last decade, 47 were conducted with small arms and light weapons as the major weapons. The intensified international action against terrorism has made the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons even more urgent.

The European Union is committed to working to combat the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. The Union aims at reducing the unregulated availability of small arms and light weapons in areas of conflict or potential conflict by promoting strict transfer controls and the safe destruction of surplus weapons, promoting measures for limiting the demand and helping affected Governments deal with all aspects of the problem. The European Union also aims to tackle the fundamental causes of instability by, inter alia, pursuing and stepping up its efforts with regard to political conflicts,

development aid, poverty reduction and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

In order to further its objectives, the European Union has a specific strategy to combat the illicit accumulation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, and various specific instruments are at its disposal. These include a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, a Joint Action on combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons and a Common Position requiring that each member State introduce national legislation to effectively control brokering activities.

The European Union is one of the foremost international actors in efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including practical work on the ground. In addition to action being financed by member States in their national programmes, the European Union and the European Community allocated for the years 2003 to 2005 some €105 million for external assistance programmes of relevance to small arms action. We are committed to continuing to play a leading role in this area and call on others to join the efforts to the maximum extent possible.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) stressed the negative effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. World leaders expressed grave concern about the effects on development, peace and security and human rights posed by, inter alia, the illicit trade in such arms. They committed themselves to supporting the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The European Union calls for ensuring in concrete terms that the Outcome Document's commitments give rise to immediate practical value for action on small arms and light weapons, including, among other things, the work to be done and the resources to be provided, as appropriate, by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. The European Union will fully contribute to the expeditious and comprehensive implementation of small arms and light weapons-related General Assembly resolutions, including those addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation. The Union invites others to do likewise.

The European Union is deeply disappointed that the Programme of Action Review Conference was unable to agree on an outcome document. Notwithstanding this, we recognize the value of the Conference in reaffirming our commitment to the principles, measures and objectives of the Programme of Action. That commitment continues to be translated into concrete action at the national and regional levels. That should also be the case at the global level. We will need to assess together our efforts, achievements and shortcomings. This review starts at the national level but also requires a global analysis in order to seriously address the nature of the small arms problem. We look forward to coming together on a biennial basis, as established both in the Programme of Action and in the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, a time and place to be decided by the General Assembly at its current session. The review cycle should, in our opinion, culminate in a review conference.

The European Union continues to strongly encourage progress to improve small arms and light weapons transfer controls. The Union will continue to work for wider understanding among States on the need for global guidelines for transfer controls on the basis of the common understandings that were developed at the Review Conference this year.

The fight against the illicit trade in ammunition continues to be another pressing task. From the beginning of the United Nations process on small arms and light weapons, ammunition has formed an integral part of the problem. Currently there is growing awareness of the importance of this problem, reflected in the draft resolutions adopted by this Committee. It is time that we addressed the problem of conventional ammunition in a more active and a more comprehensive manner.

Global standards on marking and tracing are essential for tracking and cracking down on the illicit trade in these weapons. The adoption of the International Instrument on marking and tracing was a first, and important, step in the implementation of the Programme of Action in that regard. The European Union supports full implementation, and further

strengthening in the future, of the International Instrument by making it legally binding.

Brokering controls remain a high priority for the European Union, as illicit brokering is recognized as being among the main factors fuelling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons worldwide. The European Union is looking forward to a substantial report by the Group of Governmental Experts on brokering. In our view, the Group should take a practical approach to its work and recommend concrete measures necessary to combat the harm done by unscrupulous illicit arms brokers.

The Union is convinced that assistance to countries affected by armed violence should be provided as an integral part of development strategies, given the close link between security and development. We have also taken note of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, adopted on 7 June 2006, which clearly spells out the linkages between armed violence and development. States should mainstream action to eliminate illicit small arms and light weapons and integrate armed violence prevention programmes in plans and strategies related to security, development and poverty reduction. The European Union believes that, with its regular meetings, in New York, the Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures is making a valuable contribution to that end.

Let me now turn to the important new proposal calling for the establishment of an arms trade treaty, which we also mentioned in our general statement. Every day and everywhere, people are affected by the side effects of irresponsible arms transfers. The negative impact on peace, reconstruction, security, stability, human rights and sustainable development is especially damaging to developing countries, in particular in Africa. In addition, it diverts scarce resources from vital poverty alleviation and other development work. The European Union has noted that there is a strong call from a number of the world's political and spiritual leaders, as well as from States and civil society, for the establishment of a new treaty to better regulate the trade in arms.

As there is currently no comprehensive internationally binding instrument available to provide an agreed regulatory framework for this activity, the European Union welcomes the growing support in all parts of the world for an arms trade treaty. The European Union considers that starting a comprehensive formal process to that end at the United Nations at the earliest opportunity is called for, and views the draft resolution under discussion (A/C.1/61/L.55) as providing the basis for that.

Binding standards, consistent with existing responsibilities of States under relevant international law, would be critical in tackling conventional arms proliferation which is undesirable, irresponsible and which particularly affects some of the most vulnerable parts of the world.

The use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) by terrorists and non-State actors as a tool for threatening civil aviation and aviation involved in peacekeeping operations warrants worldwide attention and sustained and comprehensive action. MANPADS are extremely lethal, easily concealable and inexpensive. Here, the European Union firmly supports broader efforts, in various multilateral forums, focusing in particular on export controls including the Wassenaar Arrangement and the initiative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Group of Eight (G-8) to internationalize controls.

European Union member States have been working with other States in the field of MANPADS destruction and stockpile and security management and will continue to work proactively to help those States not in a position to do so to secure their stockpiles and to destroy surpluses of these weapons. The European Union encourages other States, where they are able to, to participate actively in stockpile and security management and destruction activities, to help guard against further illicit use.

The European Union fully supports intensifying efforts to prevent the illicit transfer and unauthorized access to and use of MANPADS, including strenuous implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, which were adopted by consensus. Growing international concern about the proliferation of MANPADS needs to be translated into practical support to international, regional and national efforts to combat and prevent the illicit transfer of MANPADS and unauthorized access to and use of such weapons.

The European Union welcomes progress achieved in universalizing the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and assisting victims. We

consider the first Review Conference, which took place in Nairobi in 2004, as a landmark success that provided the international community with an opportunity both to assess and to reflect on the progress that has been made on the path to a mine-free world and to refocus our efforts to achieving that goal. In order to overcome the remaining challenges for the full implementation of the Convention, the Nairobi Conference agreed on an ambitious Action Plan for the next five years, to which the European Union is fully committed. We welcome and support the subsequently adopted final documents of the Sixth and Seventh Meetings of States Parties, held in Zagreb and Geneva, respectively.

Building on this success, the European Union welcomes the appeal of the World Summit to the parties to the Convention to fully implement their commitments, as well as to all States in a position to do so to provide greater technical assistance to mine-affected States. We wish to call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible. The European Union is united in its support for and promotion of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention (A/C.1/61/L.47).

The European Union has provided assistance to affected States and communities and will continue to do so. For the years 2003 to 2005, European Union Member States and the European Community allocated over €530 million for mine action.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, we would like to point to the European Community's strategy, in particular to its strategy for the years 2005-2007, which, in the light of an interim target of zero new victims, seeks to reduce the threat of landmines on the ground and in stockpiles by offering social, economic and medical assistance to affected local populations and to the victims of landmines. The European Union as a whole will continue to support humanitarian mine action focused on the poorest mine-affected countries. We will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the international mine action system.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols constitute an essential and integral part of international humanitarian law. The CCW has a solid, well-balanced regime, which takes into account both humanitarian concerns and military requirements. It has proved its usefulness in creating a number of new legally binding instruments. The European Union attaches great importance to the effective implementation of the CCW and its Protocols, as well as to continuing with determination the work on creating new legally binding instruments under the CCW, where necessary — as, for instance, in the case of mines other than anti-personnel mines.

The CCW is particularly topical now, because the third Review Conference will be held in November. The tasks of the Review Conference are to review, clarify and strengthen where necessary existing obligations and their implementation. The European Union looks forward to a successful Review Conference — that is, a conference contributing to upholding and developing this regime in a way that further strengthens international humanitarian law; we support the efforts of the President-designate of the Conference.

The Review Conference should also achieve successful results on the issues currently under discussion in the CCW process, notably, on mines other than anti-personnel mines. The European Union wants the Review Conference to achieve tangible results through a legally binding instrument on such mines which strikes a balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations and which strengthens international humanitarian law. We call on all States parties to the CCW to make the expected progress possible at the Conference.

Another current issue that the European Union wishes to highlight is that of explosive remnants of war. On this issue, the European Union sees several goals that should be pursued simultaneously: the universalization of Protocol V, its expeditious and effective implementation and continuation of further work on munitions that may become explosive remnants of war, including sub-munitions. The further work should include both work on strengthening implementation of existing international humanitarian law and work on possible preventive technical measures.

The European Union recalls its proposal, made at the most recent meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference, that, at a minimum, the mandate of the working group on explosive remnants be extended at the Review Conference. In this context, we would state our view that the Review Conference

should be also forward-looking, setting perspectives for useful future work until the next Meeting of States parties, which should be held next year, and the following Review Conference.

Transparency in the area of conventional arms, and in particular in the area of small arms and light weapons, is an essential component of fighting the uncontrolled proliferation of such weapons and in providing an atmosphere of confidence and security. To this end, the European Union welcomes the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts that carried out the fifth review and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The achievements of the Group pave the way for development and progress with respect to the overall aim of the United Nations Register, namely, effective transparency in armaments. The recommendations of the Group need to be implemented, and the work on further developing the United Nations Register continued.

Mr. Da Rocha Paranhos (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am taking the floor on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to Mr. Roberto García Moritán, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, and Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka for their presentations this afternoon.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a problem of great seriousness and requires the particular attention of the international community. In this regard, we attach great importance to efforts, based on international cooperation, to prevent, combat and eliminate this illicit activity while ensuring respect for the rules and principles of international law, as well as to the key responsibility that falls to each and every State in ensuring the implementation of relevant measures.

Our countries are aware of the grave consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons for regions throughout the world, and we have demonstrated strong political will by adopting concrete measures in the fight against this scourge.

At its most recent meeting, held in Brasilia in September 2006, the MERCOSUR Working Group on Firearms and Ammunition had an exchange of views on the marking and tracing of ammunition, in particular on the individual marking of cartridges in line with steps already taken by a number of countries of the region. In November 2005, within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), the States members of MERCOSUR and associated States attended a meeting to consider the implementation of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. In February 2006, we attended the meeting of the OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) held to adopt model laws on the marking of firearms and thus to ensure that countries of the region apply the Inter-American Convention.

We have also contributed towards the common approach adopted in Latin America and the Caribbean by submitting specific proposals on matters pertaining to ammunition, illicit brokering, follow-up mechanisms and mechanisms for assistance and international cooperation. These proposals were enshrined in the Declaration of Antigua, Guatemala, which was adopted in May 2006 by the regional conference to review progress made in Latin America and the Caribbean in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We note with concern and deplore the failure to achieve results at the first Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action. The MERCOSUR countries and associated States are of the view that there is a need for follow-up mechanisms for the Programme as well and for biennial meetings and review conferences to continue to assess progress made in the implementation of the Programme. Although the Conference concluded without arriving at a final document, we are confident that States will have sufficient political will to find a new opportunity to make it possible to continue the process that we had launched. We wish to put on record the full commitment of our countries to the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action.

While Governments bear the primary responsibility to ensure the necessary resources for implementing the Programme of Action, our countries are of the view that there is also a need to make

progress in the provision of cooperation and assistance, including through the transfer of technologies.

The MERCOSUR countries and associated States attach particular importance to the issue of ammunition. In this regard, we believe that this matter should receive specific treatment within the United Nations, considering that the issue of small arms has been repeatedly recognized as closely linked to the issue of ammunition. We believe too that it is indispensable that we make progress towards concluding a legally binding international instrument on illicit brokering. We hope that the Group of Governmental Experts will be able to start its work as soon as possible. We wish to reaffirm our commitment to spare no effort in addressing the issue of small arms. Our key objective in that respect is to obtain results that will have a positive impact on our societies.

Anti-personnel mines and their large number of civilian victims continue to cause deep concern in our countries. South America is well aware of the humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons. Their persistence is one of their most harmful features. We are particularly disturbed by the fact that those mines have indiscriminate effects. They frequently cause civilian victims, including women and children, long after an armed conflict has ended.

MERCOSUR and associated States are convinced that peace, security and cooperation should be built on commitments that will strengthen mutual confidence and trust and will promote development and the well-being of the region. To that end, since 1989 MERCOSUR and associated States have entered into significant regional and subregional commitments, including the July 2002 Declaration of the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation. In that Declaration we committed to establishing a gradual phase-out regime which, as soon as possible, would result in the complete eradication of anti-personnel mines in accordance with the Ottawa Convention and the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

In that vein, the August 2003 Lima Declaration: For a Hemisphere Free of Anti-personnel Mines reaffirmed the importance of abiding by the principles and fulfilling the obligations under international law with respect to anti-personnel mine action, through the complete elimination of those weapons worldwide, and the creation of a South American zone free of anti-personnel mines.

The political will of our countries is reflected in specific measures such as the submission of reports in compliance with the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In the context of its national mine clearance plan, Chile launched humanitarian mine clearance operations in the north of its territory in February 2006, on the border with Peru and Bolivia, as well as in the border area between Argentina and Bolivia. At the same time, all stocks have been destroyed, leaving only the minimum quantity in accordance with the Convention. This has been a signal of strengthened mutual confidence.

Colombia has also achieved significant progress in that area, due to ongoing and joint action of the Anti-personnel Mines and Unexploded Ordnance Observatory. The Colombian Government has been working with the Observatory in order to strengthen the attention given to victims of those devices in various regions of the country.

Among the most recent achievements, should be singled out, the development and adoption of the national strategic plan to coordinate, monitor and standardize actions against anti-personnel mines and to compile existing information on that subject. The plan focuses on four areas: risk reduction education; assistance to victims; information management; and emergency mine clearance.

For its part, in 2003 the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela destroyed 47,189 mines from the arsenals of its national armed forces.

One must also recall the important role played by a number of countries in our region, in the context of mine clearance activities undertaken by the Mine Clearance Assistance Mission in Central America (MARMINCA), with the dispatch of military experts.

The MERCOSUR countries and associated States welcome the contributions made by Bhutan, Ethiopia, Latvia and Vanuatu towards the universalization of the Ottawa Convention. We encourage those countries that have not yet done so to consider the possibility of acceding to the Treaty.

Finally, we reaffirm our commitment to continue to work towards the promotion of the implementation

of the Ottawa Convention, as we confirmed at the Review Conference in Nairobi. MERCOSUR and associated States are confident that the Action Plan 2005-2009 will meet its objectives by drawing on full cooperation among its State parties. It is crucial to put an end to the unnecessary suffering caused by anti-personnel mines, by ensuring the elimination of such mines, by mine clearance and by providing assistance to victims, as well as providing education on the risk presented by those mines.

Mr. Weisleder (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor on behalf of the Central American Integration System (SICA), consisting of Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, and the associated State Mexico, I wish to congratulate you, Madam, on assuming the Chair of the First Committee and to convey to you, and all other members of the Bureau, our wishes for a successful outcome of your work.

On the topic of conventional weapons, we wish to refer in particular to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its follow-up mechanisms. They are priorities for our countries, which face real threats to their national and regional security, as reflected in the high levels of crime, organized crime and drug trafficking that are affecting our region. For that reason, we have participated enthusiastically and with great commitment in the regional conference that was successfully organized by the sister republic of Guatemala in the city of Antigua last May.

As members are aware, the Antigua Declaration was signed by all Latin American and Caribbean countries. It established parameters and high standards in the fight to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Unfortunately, as acknowledged by the Chair of the Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ambassador Kariyawasam, the expectations set out of our Declaration by far exceeded what was achieved at the Review Conference. Hence our profound disappointment at the outcome of that meeting, in particular due to the lack of agreement on follow-up mechanisms for the Programme of Action.

The Antigua Declaration addresses various aspects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which is a priority concern in our region. In that respect, it recognizes the importance of almost all members of the Organization of American States having ratified the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) and its model legislation. We are also committed to the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We are also committed to redouble our efforts to develop a legally binding instrument that would include ammunition.

We must emphasize that fact that the Antigua Declaration also recognizes that the issue of the illicit trade in ammunition is intrinsically tied to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. For that reason, we support the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the conventional arms trade, including the import, export and transit of such weapons. Such a treaty should meet the criteria of transparency and non-discrimination and should be negotiated on a multilateral basis. We also call on all States to fulfil the provisions contained in chapter II of the Programme of Action, with regard to management of stockpiles and the destruction of confiscated, seized or collected small arms and light weapons, the establishment of appropriate, detailed standards and procedures to ensure the security of existing stockpiles and the identification and responsible management of surplus stocks. In that connection, we reaffirm our support for national and regional organizations and civil society organizations in their campaigns to raise public awareness with regard to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The issue of the inadequate regulation of civilian possession of such weapons is of concern to the great majority of States, as is indicated in the report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), entitled "Five Years of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons" which notes that "Since 2002, around 70 per cent of States that have reported address issues related to civilian possession" (p. xxiii). In that respect, the countries of our subregion believe there is a need for adequate regulation of civilian acquisition and possession of small arms and light weapons through, inter alia limiting the type and quantity of weapons that civilians can acquire and possess, as well

as strict requirements for licenses, permits and registration.

We wish to express our gratitude for the assistance provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and by the United Nations Development Programme in formulating our national reports.

As indicated in the Antigua Declaration, we have suggested the establishment of a database within the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the publication of best practices on various aspects of the Programme of Action. Once again, we call on Member States and international organizations that are in a position to do so to meet the needs of national authorities that request cooperation and assistance in implementing the Programme of Action.

Most of the aforementioned issues should have been reflected in a final document of the July 2006 Review Conference. A number of them fall under the Programme of Action, and others clearly complement the Programme. Unfortunately, the lack of political will among certain States made negotiations impossible and jeopardized the significant progress that has been achieved so far. In that context, there was not even the political will to lay the basis for the follow-up mechanism called for in the Programme of Action. The SICA countries and Mexico again call on the First Committee to effectively resolve the issue of biennial follow-up in order to review the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action and to adopt necessary measures to strengthen it.

The SICA countries and Mexico reaffirm our commitment to buttress the Programme of Action and to continue working, on the regional and subregional levels, to strengthen it. We shall spare no effort as the First Committee continues its endeavours.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Although no final document resulted from the 2006 Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the Programme remains significant in guiding the international community in its fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. All parties concerned continue to make efforts in promoting the full implementation of the Programme of Action. China is ready to communicate and cooperate further with the parties concerned in order to promote the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action, with a view to removing the threat caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at an early date.

China welcomes the initial work of the United Nations group of governmental experts on the illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in November, and hopes that the group will help strengthen the international community's understanding of the issue of illicit brokering and will explore effective and feasible solutions.

China notes that some countries have put forward new initiatives on regulating the conventional arms trade. We are of the view that each country must adopt measures to regulate its own arms trading activities, in order to effectively combat the illicit trade in arms. At the same time, since the arms trade is a complicated issue, and since the security, national defence and economic interests of all States are also relevant to the issue, all parties should hold extensive, practical, in depth discussions on relevant issues and identify, by consensus, the work that lies ahead.

As a transparency mechanism, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms plays a positive role in enhancing confidence among countries. China has great regard for the Register and has actively and constructively participated in the work of every Group of Governmental Experts on the Register. Through common efforts, this year's Group again made important progress further reaffirming the spirit of relevant General Assembly resolutions and the principles and purposes of the Register. Those helped to maintain the universality of the Register. The Group also made important efforts towards increasing the operational flexibility of the Register, and we welcome that progress.

Proceeding from the principle of putting people at the centre, the Chinese Government accords the highest priority to and is committed to resolving humanitarian issues related to arms control and stands for a balanced approach to addressing the humanitarian concerns and legitimate military and security needs of each State.

China also considers important and supports the efforts related to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). China earnestly fulfils its obligations under the CCW and its Protocols and actively participates in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established by State parties to the Convention.

Since its accession in 1998 to Amended Protocol II, on anti-personnel mines, China has overcome financial, technological and other difficulties in order to promote full implementation of the Protocol, and that has been successful. China fully understands the humanitarian concerns caused by anti-vehicle landmines and has been participating in the relevant deliberations aimed at constructively achieving a proper solution. We hope all parties will adhere to the principles of equity, pragmatism and consensus and will accommodate each other's concerns on the basis of mutual respect, in order to make progress in the armoured vehicle launched mine clearance process.

China has been actively engaged in international demining assistance aimed at ridding countries of problems caused by landmines. Last month, China launched a three-month demining training course in Nanjing, for 40 mine clearance officers from Jordan and Lebanon. China will also donate demining equipment to those countries.

We are pleased to see that the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War, an important achievement as part of the CCW, is about to enter into force. China believes that the entry into force of the Protocol will influence more countries to accede to the Protocol and promote the early realization of its objectives. The Chinese Government is working actively to promote the ratification process.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): Today, I would like to take the opportunity to address aspects of the conventional weapons debate relating both to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and to small arms and light weapons. I shall first address CCW issues.

At the upcoming CCW Review Conference in November, New Zealand will be looking for progress on the effective implementation of international humanitarian law so as to mitigate the humanitarian impact of conflict. In particular, New Zealand is committed to the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on cluster munitions, one which allows our concerns relating to reliability, targeting, transfers and destruction of outmoded stocks to be addressed. We were one of a group of countries which introduced a negotiating mandate for consideration at the Review Conference to address the humanitarian concerns posed by cluster munitions.

Key elements which we should be addressing in our pursuit of more specific international regulations include, first, the problematic persistent nature of failed cluster munitions; secondly, any use of cluster munitions within areas with concentrated civilian populations; thirdly, indiscriminate attacks of a nature to strike combatants and civilians alike; fourthly, the use of those weapons in circumstances likely to cause disproportionate loss of civilian life and damage to civilian objects; and lastly, the worrying potential for increased proliferation, retention or use of outmoded cluster munitions stocks. The negative impact of cluster munitions contamination on humanitarian operations and on economic recovery in post-conflict situations is already well established, with corroborating evidence from recent events reinforcing the necessity for action.

We would also welcome the conclusion of an instrument on mines other than anti-personnel mines, if a legally binding text could be agreed that made a credible improvement on existing provisions of international humanitarian law. We do not see that this requirement could be satisfied by the conclusion of a text which carried optional provisions on the key issues of detectability and active life.

On small arms, we were among those who were disappointed not to have reached agreement on an outcome document recording this year's review of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We do not underestimate the complexities of reconciling State sovereignty, commercial and trade freedoms and civil liberty considerations with steps that need to be taken at the global level to mitigate and prevent the harm done by the illicit trade in light weapons. However, we do consider that further global-level action is possible and certainly warranted.

In that context, we strongly support the initiative by the United Kingdom and others to launch discussions at the United Nations level on an arms trade treaty. We welcome the circulation of a draft resolution on that subject (A/C.1/61/L.55) for consideration at this session.

We very much welcome Canada's initiative to co-convene a global meeting on principles to guide decisions on transfers of small arms and light weapons, which will be held in Geneva in mid-2007. The

suggested global guidelines which emerged from the Nairobi meeting on transfer controls last April appear to us to be a sound platform on which to build such discussions.

Finally, we look forward to the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on arms brokering. We consider that this too should help maintain momentum on the issue of small arms and light weapons over 2007.

Mr. Kandie (Kenya): The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction has registered tremendous progress towards the goals set by the Nairobi Action Plan. The universalization of the Mine Ban Convention has received a welcome boost since the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties, by the deposit of instruments of ratifications by Ukraine, Haiti, the Cook Islands and Brunei Darussalam. The Mine Ban Convention is now 151 States strong. That is good news indeed. The reports by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Latvia on the fulfilment of their stockpile destruction obligations is yet another step forward. In addition, the fulfilment of article 5 obligations by Guatemala and Suriname gives us further cause to be optimistic that universalization will soon be achieved.

The recent successes on the Mine Ban Convention should not, however, make us complacent. Members need to fast-track the implementation of commitments towards realization of the Convention's goals and ultimately towards a totally mine-free world, so that our peoples can go about their everyday lives without the terrible prospect of risking the loss of life or limb.

In that regard, we wish once again to appeal to States to fulfil their obligations to assist those affected and afflicted by landmines. The positive momentum created since Nairobi, through the Seventh Meeting of States Parties just concluded in Geneva, should be sustained and accelerated. More efforts need to be exerted to ensure full universalization of the Convention. To that end, assistance should be given to Member States that have undertaken to fulfil their obligations in destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, as well as in mine clearance commitments.

In about two years' time, we will reach the first deadlines for the clearance of anti-personnel mines. In that regard, the true test of the Mine Ban Convention will be the manner in which requests for deadline extensions are handled. States parties will be called upon to honour the Convention's tradition of international cooperation and transparency in dealing with requests for extensions, while remaining faithful to the Convention's overall aim of ending, for all people for all time, the senseless suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

In conclusion, we urge delegations to remember that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is a solid instrument based on basic humanitarian considerations. It seeks to rid the world of the barbaric and inhumane weapons that continue to have such devastating consequences for innocent people. Kenya therefore strongly encourages Member States to adhere to the Convention's obligations and urges all those States that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so.

Mr. Chidumo (Mozambique): As I am taking the floor in the Committee for the first time, allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam, upon your election as Chair of the First Committee as well as to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Mozambique attaches great importance to the issue of disarmament. We note with concern the lack of progress in the multilateral machinery dealing with the issue of disarmament. Lack of consensus on this matter prevented the 2005 World Summit from mentioning disarmament and non-proliferation in its Outcome Document (resolution 60/1).

The main challenge in today's world is to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which constitutes a threat to peace, security and development in many countries, particularly in Africa. We therefore wish to express our disappointment at the failure, last July, of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to agree on an outcome document. During that meeting, my delegation expressed its hope that the Conference would come up with a strategy that would foster the full implementation of the Programme of Action, while enabling the establishment of measures to reduce the negative impact of small arms and light weapons.

Despite the recent failure, my country continues to attach great importance to the prevention, combat and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We would therefore like to reiterate the continued relevance of the Programme of Action, whose integrity should be observed. The implementation of the Programme of Action remains a key element in supporting the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in promoting long-term security and stability to create an enabling environment for sustainable development in developing countries, particularly in Africa. The successful implementation of the Programme of Action depends both on national efforts and, to a large extent, on our political commitment to strengthen cooperation at regional and global levels.

At the national level, Mozambique is committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action as a step forward towards the consolidation of peace, security and stability within and beyond our borders. After a difficult period of our history, as a result of the war of destabilization in the Southern African region which was characterized by the proliferation and illicit use of firearms and light weapons, the Southern African region is now fully engaged in regional economic integration for the benefit of its peoples.

It is in that framework that my country has been engaged since 1992 in the process of the collection and destruction of firearms. In fact, in 1995, a structured special operation aimed at identifying, recovering and destroying hidden caches of firearms was initiated, which led to the destruction of about 30,000 pieces of different types of firearms and more than a million items of ammunition and related material. Those operations were conducted in collaboration with neighbouring South Africa and constitute an example of fruitful cooperation between neighbouring countries in the area of public security.

Mozambique continues to encourage initiatives from civil society towards promoting and consolidating the culture of peace and non-violence. Furthermore, in compliance with the Programme of Action, Mozambique established in 2005 a national commission responsible for the coordination and integration of national efforts necessary to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. At the regional level, within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), we are in the process of implementing the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

Mozambique wishes to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism as an essential element for the strengthening and promotion of disarmament, peace and security. In order to deal effectively with the threat that small arms and light weapons represent to humanity, the international community needs to seriously take continued and concerted action to prevent the proliferation of those arms.

This session offers an opportunity to make progress in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. For that reason, Mozambique supports the establishment of a common international instrument on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms that would help to prevent, combat and eradicate sales or transfers of such arms that are likely to promote conflict, displacement of people and terrorism. We believe the negotiations for that important instrument should be conducted within the framework of the United Nations and through a transparent and inclusive process, in order to ensure consensus among all Member States.

Let me conclude by expressing our sincere hope that this session will contribute towards progress in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ultimately to the well-being of our peoples.

Mr. Choi Hong-ghi (Republic of Korea): Since this is my first opportunity to take the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this important Committee.

The proliferation of conventional weapons is a matter of increasing concern to the international community. Conventional arms, used recklessly and irresponsibly, inflict no less harm and misery than weapons of mass destruction. In many regions of the world, the widespread availability of small arms is severely destabilizing, putting at risk peace, security and development, serving as a catalyst for armed conflict, supporting criminal activity and causing tragic human suffering.

The international community has made real progress in addressing this problem. The adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2001, followed by the agreement on the International Instrument on marking

and tracing and the entry into force last year of the firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime are substantive steps forward. Following on the heels of those achievements, however, it was doubly disappointing that the Programme of Action Review Conference in July failed to produce an outcome document with guidance for further measures and follow-up mechanisms.

My delegation hopes that at this session the First Committee will breathe new life into the Programme of Action and our collective commitment to implement it fully. In this regard, it is of the foremost importance for us to agree at this session on a follow-up process. The first step of such a process should be convening a biennial meeting. In that regard, we support draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.15 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We also look forward to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Illicit Brokering of Small Arms, to be convened next month, which we hope will strengthen our commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Indeed, we believe that much more can be done on the issue of small arms and light weapons. My delegation supports the initiative for an international instrument to control international arms transfers. We share the concern that legal transfers of conventional arms are sometimes used as a cover for illegal transactions, especially of small arms and light weapons. To address that problem, an effective, transparent system of controls over international arms transfers is a prerequisite.

A meaningful achievement in the field of conventional arms was the agreement at the recent Group of Governmental Experts meeting to further expand the scope of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. My delegation commends the panel for their achievements, including the decision to reduce the minimum size of warships from 750 to 500 metric tons and the provision of an optional standardized form for reporting transfers of small arms and light weapons.

We note that the number of Member States participating in the Register has not increased since 2001. We urge those States that have not yet participated to join. Similarly, we would like to see wider participation in the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. By enhancing transparency in military matters, these mechanisms reduce international tensions and build confidence within the community of nations.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has played a pivotal role in realizing the principles of international humanitarian law, ever since it was adopted in 1980. As a State Party to the CCW, the Republic of Korea has faithfully implemented the principles of the Convention and participated actively in widening and strengthening the CCW regime. My delegation welcomes the upcoming entry into force of Protocol V of the CCW on explosive remnants of war (ERW), and wishes to inform the Committee that our Government has begun the internal review process for its ratification.

The last two CCW Review Conferences have produced some successful results. My delegation is concerned, however, that with the Third Review Conference only a month away, the negotiations on mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPMs) may be stalling, despite the five years of hard work put in by the Group of Governmental Experts. Considering that this topic is to be one of the main focuses of the upcoming Conference, we hope that those negotiations will not provide yet another disappointment in the field of multilateral disarmament issues.

My delegation supports the idea of a legally binding instrument that addresses the inhumane effects of such mines. In light of the divergence of views that persists on key issues, however, we believe that, if the States Parties to the CCW hope to see tangible outcomes produced at the Third Review Conference in November, we need to explore creative ways to implement practical, realistic procedures. We sincerely hope that all States Parties will demonstrate the political will necessary to bridge the remaining perception gaps on that kind of mines and work out a viable solution.

Mr. Kosheler (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The uncontrolled proliferation of conventional weapons in the world is a matter of justifiable concern to the international community and the most acute evidence of that problem may be seen in countries with low levels of socio-economic development. It is difficult to contest the direct link between the intensity of armed conflicts, on the one hand, and poverty, mass violations of human rights and the norms of international humanitarian law, the

mobilization of child soldiers and cross-border crime on the other. We share the concerns about the humanitarian aspects of the issue.

At the same time, we note the essence of the issue, first and foremost, in the illicit trafficking of weapons. As practice shows, it is precisely the illicit supply that provides the main source of such weapons for illegal armed groups, criminal elements and the Governments of States that are under Security Council embargoes.

We support the efforts of the international community towards the prevention of the uncontrolled and illicit proliferation of conventional weapons. We consider the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an important institution for strengthening confidence and security in international relations. Russia regularly submits data to the Register. We support the inclusion in the Register of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and we are satisfied with the results of the work just concluded by the Group of Governmental Experts on the function and development of the Register. The Group succeeded in adopting, by consensus, a draft report of the Secretary-General to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

The Group of Governmental Experts in 2003, then again in 2006, set a good precedent for the development of the Register. The pragmatic tactic of small steps in that sphere is the most realistic and acceptable one under present day conditions. We believe that the further development of the Register will come about, first of all, by taking into account the important goal of the universalization of the Register. We note some progress in the control of small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and global levels. However, the problem of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in certain regions of the world not only continues, but is becoming more acute.

We are in favour of the solution to the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the basis of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We do not regard the Review Conference on the Programme of Action as having been without results. Nearly all countries that participated in the Conference confirmed their adherence to the Programme of Action. Nobody spoke of revision of the Programme. On the contrary, everybody spoke of the importance of expanding joint efforts in the prevention of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, with a stress on dealing with specific problems at the national and regional levels.

We are in favour of a continuation of specific measures to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons from legal trade to illicit trafficking. We are in favour of strengthening regional interaction to prevent the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We took an active part in the work of the special session of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) forum devoted to small arms and light weapons issues in Vienna on 17 May 2006. At that conference, a number of important proposals were considered to improve the tracing and marking of small arms and light weapons, as well as measures designed to prevent the illicit proliferation of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS).

In the anti-terrorism context, we attach special consideration to ensuring control over MANPADS. Such a weapon in the hands of terrorists represents a direct threat to the safety of civil aviation. We are actively working with our partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States on issues relating to man-portable air defence systems. The provisions set out in documents adopted at the regional level to strengthen controls over the export of man-portable air defence systems would benefit from being extended to other regions of the world.

We can understand the desire on the part of certain States to take steps to bring order to the legal trade in weapons, in order that that trade does not feed the black market or act as a source of destabilizing accumulation, especially in crisis regions. We are not opposed to discussing this issue. The proposal put forward by a group of countries to draft an international instrument to regulate the trade in conventional weapons merits attention. However, we believe that such work is only justified if it is aimed at halting the illicit trade in weapons and offers specific measures to prevent such weapons from being diverted from the legal trade to illicit trafficking — especially into the hands of terrorists.

In addition, we believe that joint work at the United Nations should seek to bring order to the legal production and export of weapons — which is to say, it should prevent piracy in the production of weapons,

the export of such weapons under expired licenses and their re-export without the authorization of the country of origin. In that regard, we should also take into account the following facts.

There are already international and regional instruments in place to promote the orderly trade in weapons. Those include the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Wassenaar Arrangements. Their basic shortcoming is that they lack effectiveness and universality. It would therefore be logical, in the first place, to attempt to gain the maximum benefit from existing instruments — and only then proceed to drafting new instruments.

We are keen to ensure that The Hague International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation is as effective as possible. In that connection, it is important that States parties to The Hague Code of Conduct fully fulfil their obligations. We favour the Code becoming a genuine multilateral mechanism for transparency and confidence in the field of the non-proliferation of missiles, with a central role being played by the United Nations — a mechanism that unites us all and does not lead to drawing new dividing lines. That is precisely the aim of the Russian initiative to amend the text of the Code: to promote adherence to the Code by States that are significant in terms of missiles.

We share the concern of the international community about the serious humanitarian consequences of the use of anti-personnel mines. We reaffirm our belief in the idea of a world free from the use of mines as weapons. Russia's concrete contribution to the achievement of that goal is its ratification of Protocol II additional to the Inhumane Weapons Convention. In principle, we do not rule out joining the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction at a reasonable future date. However, that can only occur when there is certainty that Russia will be able to fulfil its obligations. In order for that to take place, it will be necessary to resolve a host of military, technical, economic and financial problems. Our real contribution to disarmament in the area of landmines is the large-scale work taking place in Russia to eliminate or reduce our landmine stockpiles. In recent years, more than 6 million anti-personnel mines have been destroyed. We also have a project to destroy 10 million of the remaining stock of the most dangerous types of anti-personnel mines, using effective and environmentally safe technology developed by Russian specialists.

We are strictly abiding by the provisions of the CCW and the Protocols thereto. The lower chamber of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation recently approved an amendment to article 1 of the Convention, broadening its scope to non-international conflicts. The next task is to ratify Protocol V to the CCW, on explosive remnants of war.

The upcoming third Review Conference of the States Parties to the CCW will be a landmark in the strengthening of the Convention. We favour a detailed and well-balanced consideration of the implementation of the Convention, as well as the development of realistic and balanced solutions.

We have a positive view of the work done by the Group of Governmental Experts on mines other than anti-personnel mines. The Group's investigations simply confirm the sensitivity of the issue from that standpoint of the defence interests of States. We are prepared to consider further substantial exchanges of views on that subject.

We cannot but be concerned about the situation that has emerged as regards common European control of conventional armed forces. This is not the first year — nor is it our fault — that there has been a delay in the entry into force of the Adaptation Agreement on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Russia has fulfilled all its obligations under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe emanating from the 1999 Istanbul Agreement on adaptation of the Treaty. At the third conference to consider the effect of the Treaty, we once again underscored that, given the effects of large-scale military and political changes, the Treaty has by and large become outdated and has lost touch with reality. Its basic limits have been eroded as a result of NATO's expansion. We do not regard the results of that conference as satisfactory. Nor do we find satisfactory the general state of affairs as regards the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The Russian Federation will carefully analyse the

results of the conference, as well as the positions of NATO countries. On that basis, we will draw conclusions as to our future policy with regard to the implementation of the Treaty.

In April of this year, the United Nations Disarmament Commission carried out useful work on issues pertaining to confidence-building measures and transparency in conventional weapons. Unfortunately, as in 2003, it was not possible to achieve consensus on confidence-building measures. The Commission was only able to adopt a procedural report. However, on that occasion no one stated that the Commission was unnecessary or cast doubts on the importance of the principle of multilateralism. We welcome the renewal of the Commission's work. It is our hope that, in the next two year of its substantive work, it will be possible for us to produce consensus recommendations in this area.

The Russian delegation will be guided by the views contained in this statement as we consider the draft resolutions introduced in the First Committee.

The Chairperson: We shall continue our thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons tomorrow. We will also give delegations the opportunity to introduce draft resolutions. In addition, we will have a guest speaker, namely, the President-designate of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.